GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVATION
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:18
ANSWERED ON:18.02.2003
SETTING UP OF URBAN SANITATION MISSION
VSM (RETD.) COL. CHOUDHARY

Will the Minister of URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY ALLEVATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Supreme Court had directed the Union Government to set up an Urban Sanitation Mission to clean major cities;

(b) if so, the reasons for not setting up such of an Urban Sanitation Mission so far;

(c) whether the Supreme Court has expressed its concern on January 14, 2003 over long delay in setting up of the Sanitation Mission to clean major cities;

(d) whether the Supreme Court has also asked the Union Government about the comprehensive plan for the municipal solid waste management and marketing of urban compost as an alternative for the fertilizers;

(e) if so, the reaction of the Union Government thereto; and

(f) the time by which such an Urban Sanitation Mission is likely to be set up?

Answer

MINISTER OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT & POVERTY ALLEVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR)

(a)to(f): A Statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.18 DT. 18.2.2003 REGARDING SETTING UP OF URBAN SANITATION MISSION.

(a): No, Sir.

(b): Does not arise.

(c): No, Sir.

(d): The Hon`ble Supreme Court in its order dated January, 14, 2003 relating to Writ Petition (Civil) No.888/96 has directed the Union of India and also State Governments to give their response to the specific suggestions made by the Petitioner, Mrs. Almitra H. Patel, for improving solid waste management, including the setting up of an Urban Sanitation Mission and marketing of urban compost as an alternative for the fertilizers.

(e): The Planning Commission has proposed in the Tenth Plan a new mission mode State sector programme named `Urban Sanitation Mission` with focus on assisting Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) with Special Central Assistance for setting up sanitary land-fills, composting plants for urban solid waste management and improvement of drainage with a proposed additional allocation of Rs.2000 crores. Guidelines for the mission are at consultation stage between the Planning Commission and the concerned Ministries/Departments of Government of India.

As regards marketing of urban compost as an alternative for fertilizers, the Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperation is of the view that urban compost is bulky material supplying nutrients in the range of only 1-3%. It has favourable effect on the physical properties of soils and is useful as a supplementary nutrient source. However, the main source of nutrient supply to crops is chemical fertilisers, supplying nutrients in the range of 16-60%. There is no meaningful substitute of chemical fertilisers for ensuring high productivity of crops. Ministry of Agriculture & Cooperation and Indian Council of Agricultural & Research are in agreement with the need for conjunctive use of organic manures (including city compost) with chemical fertilizers for sustainable agriculture production and improving soil fertility. However, the limit of toxic elements and contaminants has to be maintained within safer limits for large-scale use in agriculture and hence, has to be monitored for its quality.

To encourage the use of compost, Ministry of Agriculture was giving support for creating infrastructure like setting up of compost plants so as to reduce cost and make more and more compost available to the farmers at a reasonable cost. The Scheme has been transferred in October, 2000 to the States which are now expected to take up this activity within the overall limit of funds provided for such schemes.

(f): No commitment or time limit can be given by the Government of India for setting up the Urban Sanitation Mission at this stage.